

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

SAJ-01 /059 W

----- 087613

R 070614Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5146

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 5089

FOLLOWING REPEAT BOMBAY 878 SENT ACTION NEW DELHI

INFO CALCUTTA/MADRAS 6 APR 76.

QUOTE:

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT IN

SUBJ: SHIV SENA CANDIDATE WINS ELECTION FOR MAYOR OF BOMBAY

REF: BOMBAY 734

1. DESPITE THE RULING OF THE SUPREME COURT ON THE MORNING OF APR 5, (OVERTURNING A DECISION OF THE BOMBAY HIGH COURT) PREVENTING COUNCILLORS DETAINED UNDER MISA FROM PARTICIPATING IN BOMBAY'S APRIL 5 ELECTION FOR MAYOR, THE OPPOSITION CANDIDATE MANOHAR JOSHI (SHIV SENA) WON THE ELECTION BY TWO VOTES. MOST OBERSVERS HAD BELIEVED THE DETAINEES' VOTES WOULD BE ESSENTIAL FOR AN OPPOSITION TRIUMPH.

2. OUT OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION HOUSE OF 140 MEMBERS, 131 VOTED. TWO SEATS PREVIOUSLY VACATED BY DEATH REMAINED UJILLED, AND THE SEVEN DETAINEES WERE NOT PERMITTED TO VOTE. THREE OF THE 131 VOTES CAST WERE DECLARED INVALID BECAUSE THEY WERE

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IMPROPERLY MARKED.

3. WITH SEVEN DETAINED COUNCILLORS EXCLUDED FROM PARTICIPATION, CONGRESS(R) HAD BELIEVED IT HAD ENOUGH VOTES TO WIN. IT WAS COUNTING ON ITS OWN 53 MEMBERS' VOTES, THE SUPPORT OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE WITH TEN VOTES, THE THREE CIPI VOTES, THREE FROM INDEPENDENTS FOR A TOTAL OF 69. MOREOVER TWO JANA SANGH DETAINEES WERE ALLOWED TO VOTE AS THEY WERE NOT COVERED BY THE POLICE COMMISSIONER'S APPEAL BECAUSE THEY WERE EXPECTED TO CROSS OVER, SO THAT ANTICIPATED TOTAL OF CONGRESS(R) WOULD HAVE BEEN 71, BUT IT ACUTALLY GOT ONLY 63 VOTES. IN ITS PRE-ELECTION CALCULATIONS, CONGRESS(R) COUNTED NO MORE THAN 62 VOTES FOR THE SHIV SENAALED OPPOSITION. (BREAKDOWN AS FOLLOWS: SHIV SENA 36, JANA SANGH 10, SOCIALISTS 8, CONGRESS(O) 3 AND CIVIC FORUM 5.)

4. COMMENT: FROM WHAT WE CAN GATHER, CONGRESS(R) MAY HAVE HAD DIFFICULTY KEEPING THE MUSLIM LEAGUE IN LINE. THE BOMBAY PRESS SPECULATES THAT SOME MUSLIM LEAGUE COUNCILLORS MAY AT THE LAST MINUTE HAVE CROSSED OVER TO THE OPPOSITION. INTERESTINGLY, ONE SHIV SENA COUNCILLOR TOLD US THAT SOME MUSLIM LEAGUE COUNCILLORS WITHDREW THEIR SUPPORT FOR CONGRESS(R) BECAUSE OF THEIR DISSATISFACTION WITH THE PROPOSED COMPULSORY STERILIZATION BILL PENDING IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE. THE PRESS ALSO SAYS THAT THE THREE INVALIDATED BALLOTS WERE PROBABLY MISMARKED INTENTIONALLY IN ORDER TO DERPIVE CONGRESS(R) OF VOTES IT WAS COUNTING ON.

5. THE LOSS OF THE ELECTION IS A BLOW TO CONGRESS(R) AND RAJNI PATEL'S PRESTIGE. A CONGRESS(R) MAYOR HAS NOT BEEN ELECTED FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS. PATEL HAD ASKED THAT THE SHIV SENA BE BANNED, BUT THE PARTY SUPPORTS MRS GANDHI'S PROGRAMS, AND SHE REPORTEDLY HAS NOT AGREED TO BAN IT. JOSHI IS CLOSE TO CONGRESS(R) LEADERS, AND HE REPORTEDLY WANTS HIS PARTY TO WORK WITH CONGRESS(R) IN ORDER TO AVOID THE RISK OF BEING BANNED. IN VIEW OF SHIV SENA'S SUCCESS IN THE MAYORAL ELECTIONS, THE CENTER MAY NOW WISH TO CLOSELY OBSERVE ITS ACTIVITIES IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE SUCCESS DOES NOT BOOST SHIV SENA SUPPORT IN LOCAL MAHARASHTRIAN POLITICS TO THE DETRIMENT OF CONGRESS(R).
COURTNEY

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Disposition History: n/a
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